

plants growing where the larvae occurred I have now found that in fact they are the very similar *Carex panicea*.— R. J. HECKFORD, 67 Newnham Road, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon PL7 4AW.

New records of *Vanessa cardui* (L.) and *V. virginiensis* (Drury) (Lep.: Nymphalidae) from the island of Corvo

Corvo consists of one large extinct volcanic crater just over 700m in height and forms part of the Azores archipelago, which is situated almost in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean, some 1500 km due west of Lisbon (Portugal).

Vanessa cardui is a well-known migrant and has been recorded from many of the islands in the Azores archipelago (Vieira, V., 1997. *Bol. Mus. Mun. Funchal*, **49**: 5-76). However, the sightings of several individuals on 13 and 14 August 2003 between 100 and 400m on the southern slopes of the crater would appear to be the first records for the island of Corvo.

Vanessa virginiensis is also a migrant but has in general been reported with far less frequency, due possibly to its resemblance to the former species, but more probably because it is a less frequent visitor to the eastern side of the Atlantic Ocean (Leestmans, R., 1975. *Linn. Belg.*, **VI** (4): 88-96). It was recorded for the first time from the Azores archipelago by Marc Meyer in July 1990 on the slopes of Barossa in the Serra de Agua de Pau, Sao Miguel between 850 and 900m (Meyer, M., 1991. *Linn. Belg.*, **XII** (3): 99-116). One further record, also from Sao Miguel, was that of a specimen seen by V. Sbordoni in August 1996 in the University garden at Ponta Delgada (Vieira, 1997. *op. cit.*). It is odd that the only two previous sightings of this species should be from the most easterly island in the archipelago, since their origins were probably from the USA. The sighting of this species on Corvo, which with its near neighbour Flores forms the western group of the Azores archipelago, was at 460m on the south western slope of the crater on 13 August 2003. Although the larval foodplant known to be used by this species on the Canary Islands, Jersey Cudweed *Gnaphalium luteoalbum* (Hall, D. and P. J. C. Russell, 2000. *Ent. Rec.*, **112**: 210) was seen growing in gravel between the cobblestones of the main road leading out of Vila Nova up to the crater, the plants were very small and trampled and it would seem very unlikely that this individual was of resident stock. However, the weather for at least the previous four days had been characterised by strong NW winds, so strong that it delayed landings on Corvo until the 13 August. Although the specimen did not appear markedly worn, it was considered that this individual had probably been carried on the wind from America.

The only other species of butterfly recorded during the two day visit to Corvo were: *Pieris brassicae azorensis* (Rebel), the endemic subspecies of the Large White confined to the Azores, was extremely common, with both ova and larvae on cabbages growing in the Vila Nova residents' gardens, and seen up to 600m around the crater rim. *Vanessa atalanta* (L.), two individuals were seen on 14 August,

nectaring in gardens in Vila Nova. *Hipparchia occidentalis minima* (De Sousa), the subspecies of the Western Azores Grayling endemic to Corvo, was abundant on part of the south western slope of the crater at 450-480m but sparse on the eastern side of the crater rim, where in 1999 I had found it to be quite common. This could be the result of "improvement" to the impoverished native grassland by grazing cattle, of which there are many around the slopes of the crater; there certainly appeared to be less fine leaved grasses, such as *Festuca jubata* (the-larval foodplant) and more of the coarser varieties.— P. J. C. RUSSELL, Oakmeadow, Wessex Avenuc, East Wittering, West Sussex PO20 8NP.

Crescent Dart *Agrotis trux lunigera* Stephens (Lep.: Noctuidae): well established on Galloway coast, south west Scotland

Light trapping on the coasts of Wigtownshire and Kirkcudbrightshire between 1999 and 2003 has shown that the Crescent Dart is widely distributed and sometimes abundant. Indeed, the moth was present at the majority of rocky coastal sites where trapping was attempted during the July-August flight period:

In Wigtownshire we have found it as follows: Float Bay, O. S. grid reference NX 061472, one on 16 July 1999; Mull of Galloway, 75 on 17 July 1999; Burrow Head, NX 445343, one on 23 July 1999; Barsalloch Point, NX 346412, 7 on 24 July 1999; Monreith, NX 372393, six on 24 July 1999; Dunskey Castle, NX 005533, three on 27 July 1999, four on 21 July 2000 and Port Kale, Portpatrick, NW 991553, one on 11 July 2003.

In Kirkcudbrightshire we have found it at Torrs Heughs, Sandyhills, NX 886543, one on 30 July 1999; Meikle Ross, NX 653434, six on 3 August 2002.

According to Heath and Emmet (1979. *The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* 9: 142-143) the Crescent Dart has a westerly distribution, being chiefly confined to coastal areas of southwest England, Wales and the Isle of Man. No records are shown for Scotland apart from an isolated 10km square (NJ 06) on the Moray coast, north of Forres. The Scottish Insects Record Index at the Royal Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, contains records only from the Moray coast, dated between 1853 and 1979, and a few additional 19th century records from the south east coast.

Now that the Crescent Dart appears to be firmly established on the Galloway coast it is interesting to consider whether it has simply been overlooked in the past or whether or not it might be a case of recent northward expansion. The earliest comprehensive moth records for the area are by R. S. and J. G. M. Gordon but they make no mention of Crescent Dart (R. S. Gordon. 1913. A List of the Macro-Lepidoptera of Wigtownshire. *Transactions of the Dumfries and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian and Society*, 1912-13, pp. 168-188; J.G.M. Gordon. 1919. The Lepidoptera of Wigtownshire, *Transactions of the Dumfries and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 1918-19, pp. 156-167). It would be surprising if the Gordons and their correspondents overlooked the